

Assisted living Advisor

A resource for assisted living providers serving low income seniors

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SERVICE PLAN UPDATES

Assisted living tenants frequently experience accidents and illnesses that result in a period of hospitalization or the need for skilled care. In determining when it is appropriate to reassess clients who are ready to be transferred back to the ALP, providers should review two sections of assisted living rules (IAC 321, Chapter 25):

Section 25.23 (2) (Occupancy in and transfer from a program)

"...A program shall evaluate each tenant's functional, cognitive, and health status within 30 days of occupancy **and as needed**, but not less than annually, **to determine the tenant's continued eligibility for the program and to determine any modifications to needed services.**"

Section 25.28 (Service plan)

"When a tenant needs personal care or health-related care, the service plan shall be updated within 30 days of occupancy **and as needed**, but not less than annually..."

Programs may choose to offer the tenant who wishes to return to the AL program an assessment before discharge from the hospital or nursing home. However, because Iowa assisted living programs fall under the Landlord Tenant Act, the program cannot decline to take the tenant back because he/she did not wish to be assessed.

When a tenant returns from the hospital or nursing home, the nurse may feel that, based on observations and/or information provided by the transferring facility, a reassessment is warranted

to ensure that the program can continue to meet the resident's personal and health care needs. If the program conducts a reassessment and determines that the client's needs are outside the scope of occupancy criteria (as defined in the occupancy agreement), the tenant and family members should be engaged in a conversation about alternative placement. If the tenant refuses alternative placement options, the program may choose to follow the procedures for an involuntary transfer, found in AL rules (321-25.26(231C)).

DIA surveyors will ensure that the program did not fail to reassess and make changes to the service plan of a client who has experienced a decline in health or functional status following a period of hospitalization or a nursing home stay.

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Regulatory reminders

- Ensure that tenants receive an assessment within 30 days of admission that includes evaluation of health, cognitive, and functional status.
- Ensure that tenants who are competent to make health care decisions sign their service plan.

WHO IS A DPOA?

A durable power of attorney (DPOA) is an individual the tenant has designated to make health care decisions when they are no longer capable of doing so for themselves. The durable power of attorney must be activated by a physician's

order that indicates the tenant is no longer capable of making decisions independently.

It is important to obtain copies of any legal documentation regarding financial and health care decisions (i.e., guardianship, power of attorney, durable power of

attorney) when tenants enter an AL program.

In cases where the tenant has been diagnosed with dementia and there is no legal provision for an alternate decision-maker, it is important to draw the family into a discussion regarding the need for appointing a guardian or DPOA.

ASSESSING LEISURE INTERESTS

Assisted living regulations require AL programs to develop an activities program that:

1. Includes appropriate programming for each tenant;
2. Supports the tenant's service plan and is consistent with program statement and occupancy policies;
3. Includes a monthly schedule of events that is distributed to tenants; and
4. Allows tenants the opportunity to choose their levels of participation in activities.

It can sometimes be difficult to identify and create appropriate activities for each tenant. Surveyors will look for a leisure assessment that indicates the program has attempted to identify what activities the tenants might enjoy. Many times this assessment is in a checklist form, with such sections as crafts and hobbies, physical activities, socialization, and spiritual life. While checklists can

provide some information about the tenants' basic likes and dislikes, they are better used as a conversation starter. Consider how much more meaningful an assessment might be if the checklist was used primarily to open a dialogue about how the resident spent leisure time prior to admission and what kinds of activities he or she might enjoy.

Tip: It's always a good idea to reassess leisure needs at least annually. We're never too old to pick up a new hobby!

For example, rather than asking tenants if they have attended church services, Bible studies, or sang in the choir, consider asking, "Would you be comfortable telling me about your spiritual life?" There may be a significant spiritual relationship or experience outside the usual checklist that would not have been discovered without opening a dialogue.

Many rich and meaningful conversations can be derived by using the checklist as a starting point, and activities that are truly meaningful for tenants can be developed.

The completed checklists can be valuable in quantifying activity likes and dislikes. The activity director can utilize the checklists to determine how many tenants enjoy bingo, card games, quilting, etc. Checklists also help to identify tenants who have common interests. There may be only a few tenants who enjoy scrapbooking, but the activity director could create opportunities for these tenants to engage in their favorite pastime together.

The activity director should always ensure that individual tenants are engaged in meaningful activity and that the ALP is delivering group activities that are meaningful to a large number of tenants. Resident council is a great place to seek feedback on the value of your activity program.

LOW-COST, MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

Delivering a stellar activities program can sometimes put a strain on an assisted living program's budget. Providers often struggle to create meaningful activities that don't bust the budget. Try these low cost activities that tenants might enjoy.

Tea with the director

Provide a homemade dessert and a variety of teas and coffees. Set up the table banquet style, and sit in the middle so everyone can see and hear you. Choose a topic (i.e., growing up on the farm, your fondest memory of a grandparent,

the first president you voted for), or let residents choose a topic. An informal visit with residents can be a great relationship-builder and allows residents a valuable opportunity to reminisce.

Host a cookie decorating party

Invite preschool children over to help seniors cut out and decorate cookies for Christmas or Valentine's Day. Put two preschoolers and two seniors at each table. Provide them with small bowls of colored frostings and toppings. Don't forget the paper or inexpensive plastic tablecloths for easy clean-up!

Afternoon snacks bring residents out

Make afternoon snacks a group event. Try making homemade donuts, root beer floats, or ice cream sundaes. Or bring in a few ice cream freezers and have homemade ice cream in the courtyard. Or set tables up banquet style, provide dishes of melted vanilla and chocolate bark, along with bowls of crackers, pretzels, cookies, crushed peppermints, and sprinkles and invite residents to "dip into summer." Make plenty of dipped treats and put them in your coffee area for snacks.

AL WEEK PLANNING GUIDES AVAILABLE ONLINE

The National Center for Assisted Living, in conjunction with the Assisted Living Federation of America and the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, recently released materials designed to help AL providers plan and celebrate

National Assisted Living Week (NALW). The celebration will begin September 11 and run through September 17.

This year's ALW theme is "A Fair to Remember," and the logo is multi-colored flags flying at a county fair. The theme recalls the local fairs of yesteryear, with blue ribbon bake-offs, petting zoos, and parades. Under this theme, staff will be able to create a fair-like atmosphere within the program and engage the

community with exciting events. Planning materials available include:

- A sample proclamation
- A sample media advisory
- NALW Planning Guide
- Logo

Materials are available free of charge at www.nalw.com.



MEDICAID REFORM AND ASSISTED LIVING

During the 2005 legislative session, the Iowa Department of Human Services submitted HF 841 to the Iowa Legislature. In this proposed legislation, DHS lays out the plans for a massive overhaul of Iowa's Medicaid system. The legislation, referred to as the "lowacare Act," passed the Legislature, and DHS has been negotiating for approval with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

HF 841 is a lengthy document that outlines Iowa's plan to restructure the Medicaid program to make it more efficient and to contain costs. The legislation includes a recommendation to expand Medicaid eligibility to include individuals from 19 to 64 years of age, who meet the expanded population Medicare criteria.

A major component of great importance to assisted living providers is a recommendation to rebalance long-

term care. This component of the lowacares Act outlines a plan to increase acuity criteria for eligibility for Medicaid coverage in a nursing home. Currently, applicants need to require daily assistance with two or more activities of daily living to meet Medicaid nursing home admission criteria. Through this legislation, the criteria for nursing home admission under the Medicaid program will be raised to three activities of daily living. It is anticipated that this will result in an increased demand for assisted living services under the Medicaid program.

Assisted living as a waiver service

In a related piece of legislation (HF 617), the legislature gave permission to DHS to petition CMS to include assisted living as a service offered under the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Elderly Waiver. If permission is granted, a reimbursement rate will be established. This will eliminate the "piece

meal" approach that providers have been using to care for waiver clients in assisted living and provide for a more streamlined payment system.

In 2004, IFA staff participated in a task force created to make recommendations regarding rates if/when approval is received to deliver assisted living services under the waiver. It is anticipated that the reimbursement will be an acuity-based system that mirrors the current nursing home reimbursement structure. The task force recommended a three-tiered payment structure, based on a percent of the average daily Medicaid reimbursement rates for nursing homes.

HF 617 directs DHS, following receipt of approval to include assisted living as a waiver service, to work with AL providers to create and submit a plan to the General Assembly. IFA will be included in those discussions and will seek provider input.

View HF 841 and HF 617 at www.legis.state.ia.us, under "Track Legislation."

TRANSFER OF WAIVER CLIENTS

ALPs that care for waiver clients should ensure that, when a client is discharged to a hospital or nursing home, the program follows DHS protocol to ensure that waiver reimbursement and client eligibility are not jeopardized.

The income maintenance (IM) worker at the local DHS office will make appropriate entries into Iowa's Automated Benefit Calculation (IABC) system when

clients are transferred to the hospital or a nursing home.

If a tenant is hospitalized for ten days or less, the IM does not need to enter information into the IABC. If a tenant's period of hospitalization ranges from 11 to 30 days, the IM will input waiver closure, indicate the date the consumer entered the hospital, and will document the date that waiver services resumed. If a tenant is hospitalized more than 30

days, the waiver will be closed, and the tenant will need to reapply for waiver eligibility.

When a tenant is admitted to a nursing home or for hospital-based skilled care for 30 days or less, the IM will input appropriate information into the IBAC. If the tenant is institutionalized for more than 30 days, the waiver will be closed, and the tenant must complete the waiver application process again.



LIFE SAFETY TIPS FOR AL PROVIDERS

Provided by
Craig Swartzbaugh
Construction Analyst
Iowa Finance Authority

"WOLF DRILL" VS. SUPPORTIVE FIRE DRILL

Fire codes are designed to prevent injuries and loss of life. The code is periodically updated to incorporate lessons learned from fires that resulted in serious injury or death.

Having a "wolf" vs. supportive fire drill can be the difference between life and death. In order to protect your life and the lives of those around you, participate enthusiastically and be supportive of fire drills. **FIRE DRILLS** are serious business.

Many residents attend fire drills halfheartedly, and some do not participate in fire drills at all. Residents who have this perception look at drills as the owner crying wolf too many times. This nonchalant attitude can create a dangerous situation in the event of a real fire.

In the next edition of the *AL Advisor*, I will provide tips on how and why it is important for you to become a supportive fire drill participant and ensure that those around you take life safety seriously.

-Craig S.

Editor
Jenny Knust
Affordable Assisted Living Coordinator
100 East Grand Avenue, Ste. 250
Des Moines, IA 50309

Phone: 515-242-4748
Fax: 515-242-4957
jenny.knust@iowa.gov



The Iowa Finance Authority is committed to providing opportunities for individuals and organizations to expand housing opportunities to low and moderate income families and individuals. Jenny Knust, Affordable Assisted Living Coordinator, serves as a technical advisor to programs seeking to serve low to moderate income seniors in the assisted living environment. The position is funded by a grant from the US Department of Agriculture, Rural Community Development Initiative. This publication is designed to serve as a resource for RCDI grant recipient organizations and others who are developing and/or managing affordable assisted living programs.

Visit our website at
www.ifahome.com
(look under "Senior Living," and
"Affordable Assisted Living")

EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL

Keeping staff abreast of best practices in health care is an essential function of the director. It is especially critical that the care-giving staff sharpen their clinical and interpersonal skills. These employees are the backbone of the assisted living program. Their interactions with tenants, visitors, and family members are a critical component in creating an environment where people see your organization as trustworthy, caring, and professional.

Good directors understand the importance of staff development and the rewards of investing in the professional development of all employees.

The Iowa CareGivers Association is a non-profit organization that represents certified nurse assistants, home health aides, patient care technicians, personal assistants, family caregivers, and other direct care workers. Through the Better Jobs Better Care Program, they provide mentorship and educational opportunities to care givers.

The ICA will host it's annual conference on Monday, September 12 and Tuesday, September 13 at the Sheraton West Des Moines (formerly University Park Holiday Inn). The two-day conference features of a variety

of keynote presentations, networking opportunities, and educational breakout sessions with topics of interest to direct care workers. Topics include nutrition, team building, conflict resolution, mentorship, cultural diversity, and many others. The cost of attending "ICA Rally: Checkpoints to Success," is \$60 for two days for members and \$150 for non-members. One-day attendance is available at a reduced price.

For more information about the Iowa Caregivers Association, the upcoming caregiver's conference or to print a registration form, visit www.caregivers.org.